

## Duxbury Beach

### Over the Years

The first official action taken by the Town of Duxbury to preserve Duxbury Beach was in 1751, when it was forbidden to pasture cows on the beach.

Since the beginning of time, Duxbury Beach has been an attraction and source of pleasure to Duxbury residents and non-residents.

It was the threat of the State's taking over the beach in the spring of 1950 that made the first big story in the volume 1, No. 1 issue of the **Clipper** that year. Over 300 residents gathered in Gardner Auditorium at the State house to protest that action and a petition signed by 1165 residents was presented to the legislative committee on harbors and public land. The then town moderator - William Wood McCarthy said that the increase in Duxbury's population from about 2500 in the winter to 9,000 in the summer proves that Duxbury is already in the recreation business. (That first issue of the **Clipper** said that the population might reach 3,000 that year).

Today, with a year round population of about 14,000 and a summer population lower in proportion to that of 1950, the beach is one reason for attracting so many new residents. Expanded parking facilities in the residential parking areas as well as more parking for out of towners makes it possible for more and more to enjoy the beach.

In the first issue of the **Clipper**, the late Frederick T. Pratt, trustee of the Duxbury Beach Association which bought the beach in 1919 to avoid the possibility of its being exploited, said that in all the years the Association had owned the beach and had kept it open in its natural state for the service of the public. "There are 2 main points to the problem," he said:

"(1) Is Duxbury Beach suitable for intensive development to serve large numbers of people?

"(2) If not, is adequate service to the public being provided to the full extent of the physical limitations?"

Mr. Pratt, who is a partner of Colonial Management Associates in Boston, produced a map to illustrate some of the details of the problem. The legislative committee, who gathered around the map, were obviously impressed by what he said, and they broke in repeatedly to ask further questions about the geology of the beach and the condition of approach highways. Mr. Pratt used the map to hammer home the fact that Duxbury Beach is actually a sandspit -- narrow, low, storm-swept and with access limited to one end.

"He repeated that the public was not barred from Duxbury Beach. He pointed out that until 1931 the only automobile access to the beach was over the ickety, half-mile wooden bridge, and that since here were no parking facilities on the beach itself, cars were parked on the bridge, which caused a fire hazard. 'Rather than exclude the public from the beach, Duxbury built a new approach,' he said. 'The town built a road into the northern end of the beach from the Green Harbor line, and there we constructed a parking space which could accommodate more than 400 cars. This parking space has since often been enlarged, and in 1941 another parking area was made available and a bathhouse was built. It was located so the public could bathe either in the ocean or in the bay. Last

were only 4 days when anyone had to wait to get into the parking space, and some of the delay was caused by traffic congestion on the approach roads. We plan to increase the parking area this summer."

In June of 1950, the selectmen, Philip Delano, chairman, said that the Duxbury Beach trustees "had done an excellent job in keeping the beach intact and well regulated for the previous 20 years." He felt that if the town took over the beach, there would be less danger of the state stepping in again. An editorial at the end of June states that "It would seem that as far as the hearing before the committee is concerned, we have won our fight for the interests of Duxbury."

### The Beach Today

Duxbury has 3 parking areas for beach lovers. The town provides about 50 free parking spaces at the west end of the Powder Point Bridge for non-residents and parking spaces for residents at the east end of the bridge. Another half mile up the coast at Blakeman's is a parking facility for about 1,200 cars and open to the public for a fee.

Conservation officer Ed Leary said the guards at the residents' parking lot entrance have had few problems with people trying to enter the lot without stickers. "99% of the people realize this particular lot is for residents only."

Leary said the funds collected at Blakeman's -- the public lot -- are used for beach maintenance -- such as dune restoration, beach grass planting and

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year we had 50% more cars than ever before, and to keep up with the public demand we had to enlarge the parking area during the rush season. Yet there

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